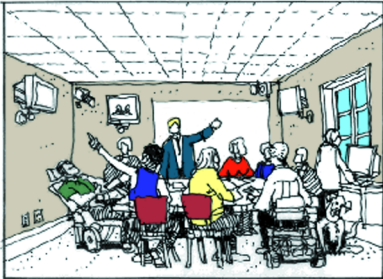


# Community Needs Assessment



This appendix summarizes the findings of the community needs assessment conducted as part of the *City of San José Greenprint: A 20-Year Strategic Plan for Parks and Community Facilities and Programs*.

The community needs assessment is a critical part of the strategic planning process. To develop a solid foundation for the strategic plan, feedback was solicited from residents regarding their needs and preferences. Activities were planned to ensure the participation of a diverse cross-section of the San Jose community. A technical assessment of the City's demographics, existing facilities, current programs, and finances also was conducted. The community needs assessment process included the following:

- A demographic profile of the City of San José;
- A statistically valid telephone survey of 1000 San Jose households;
- Neighborhood workshops in each council district;
- Focus groups to identify the needs of seniors, regional parks and trails, community-based organizations, parents and childcare, adult and youth sports, and major employers;
- A youth/teen workshop;
- A children's activity booth at the San Jose Children's Fair;
- A Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services staff workshop;
- A maintenance management workshop;
- A recreation program and service assessment;
- An analysis of San Jose's existing parks and community facilities; and

- A financial analysis by economic planning specialists, covering funding sources and financing mechanisms.

Based on these findings, an environmental scan report was developed to identify major themes that emerged during the planning process. With the exception of the financial analysis, this appendix summarizes the findings of the community needs assessment activities. The financial analysis and its recommendations for strategic plan implementation are presented in Chapter 7.

## Demographic Profile

A study of demographic trends and projections for the years 1990 through 2020 was conducted for the City of San José using the City's 10 council districts as planning areas. The basic data utilized for the demographic analysis was the *Census of Population and Housing Data* (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990). Projections were provided by Claritas, Inc., and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG, February 2000).

Major demographic findings include:

- San Jose's current population is 909,062. The projected population in 2020 is 1,101,500, a forecast of *slower, continued growth* and continued demand for parks, recreation and neighborhood services (ABAG, February 2000).
- San Jose's population virtually doubled from 1970 to 1998 to an estimated 871,000 residents *without an equal increase* in parks, community facilities, and programs.
- San Jose will have over 1,000,000 residents around the

year 2010, spurred in large part by the projected 150,000 *new jobs* expected.

- Population *density increased* to about 3,184 persons per square mile in 1998, indicating a continued need to balance density with parks and open space to ensure community livability.
- Persons of European descent are no longer the majority in San Jose. By 2010, Hispanics are expected to account for 39% of residents, Whites 33%, and Asians 24%. Effectively serving community members of *diverse backgrounds* will continue to be critical for those providing parks, recreation, and neighborhood services.
- The number of *adults over age 40 and seniors* will rise as Baby Boomers age. In the next five years, all age groups over age 40 will increase at least 12%, indicating a need to continue to expand services to these adults and seniors.
- The *youth population* (ages 10 to 19) will grow 10% in the next five years, indicating a need for continued emphasis on youth development.
- San Jose has the *third highest average household income* of the nation's 50 major metropolitan areas, and it is expected to rise to over \$100,000 per household by 2010. Providing affordable programs and services to those with more limited income will continue to be a challenge.
- San Jose is a city of *homeowners*. Thirty-six percent of housing units are rentals, which is very low for a large city. Parks, recreation and neighborhood services will continue

to be important to *building community* in these neighborhoods.

## Telephone Survey

A citywide telephone survey was conducted with 1000 San Jose residents over the age of 18 to assess community concerns and priorities regarding San Jose's parks, community facilities and programs.

Major survey findings include:

- A large percentage of respondents (79%) indicated that they or a member of their family had *visited a San Jose park* during the past year.
- When provided with a list of eleven potential *benefits* derived from parks, recreation and neighborhood services, residents indicated that their highest priorities were (in ranked order):
  - Provide *safe places for children*
  - Provide *alternatives to anti-social behavior*
  - Make areas more *livable*
  - Promote *youth development*
  - Help *seniors and persons with disabilities*
  - Improve *health*
- San Jose residents placed a high priority on *clean parks* with *improved restrooms and landscaping*.
- San Jose residents most frequently use parks that require only a *short travel period* (less than 10 minutes).
- The most common activity engaged in when visiting parks

was *hanging-out or relaxing*, followed by *picnicking and playing sports* (figure A1).

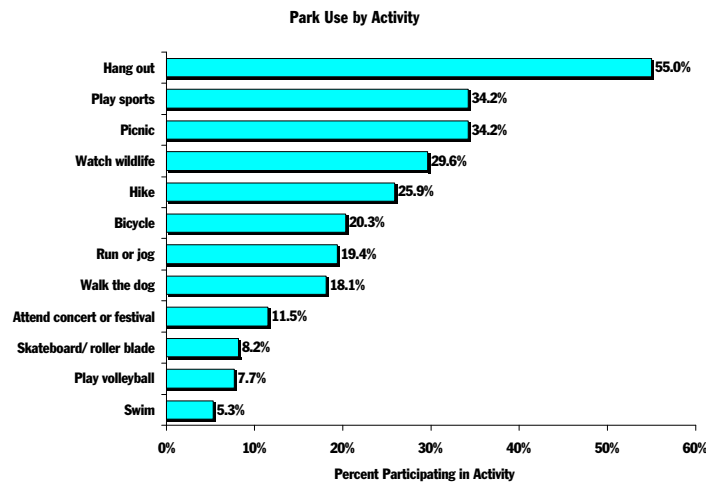


Figure A1: Park Use by Activity

- Park visits are most frequent among residents who have lived in the City *between three and ten years* and least frequent among the City's newest residents. This may indicate that new residents lack familiarity with San Jose's recreation resources.
- About 56% of respondents reported using school recreation facilities, indicating the *importance of schools* as a community recreation resource. Community members who use recreation facilities at schools most frequently use the *children's playground*, participate in *organized or casual sports*, or *go jogging* (figure A2).

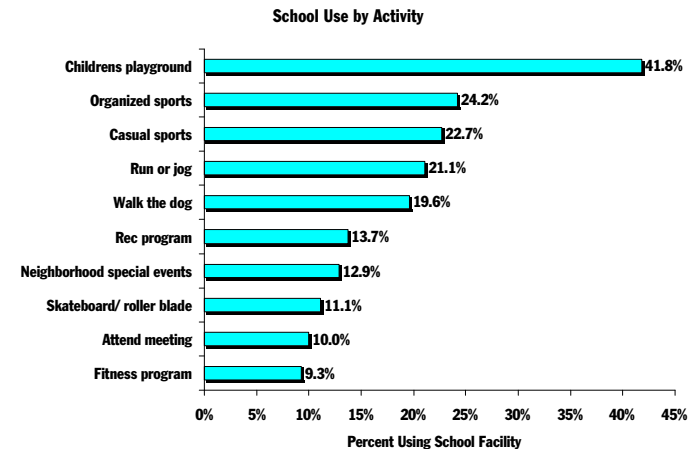


Figure A2: School Use by Activity

- The *top three indoor program activities* that respondents expressed an interest in were: participating in *special events*, joining *fitness programs*, and playing *organized sports* (figure A3).
- Among those who reported that they did not use park or school recreational facilities, *lack of time* was the reason most commonly cited. This underscores the need for short travel distances to reach park and recreation facilities.
- The significant *decline in park use after age 65* highlights the need to reevaluate program and facility needs of the elderly.
- Park use is consistent among those with *household incomes above \$20,000/year*. In each income group studied in this survey, more than 80% said they had visited

a park in the last year. However, only 61% of those with a household income below \$20,000/year reported visiting a park in the last year, indicating a need for increased out-reach to this income group (figure A4).

- The top three *spending priorities* for facility projects were *park renovations*, *open space acquisition*, and *trail system improvements*.
- Park use by ethnicity ranges from 75% to 87%. Hispanic/Latinos report the *highest level of park use*.

## Neighborhood Workshops

Neighborhood workshops were held in each of San Jose's ten council districts to gather input from community members. During the meetings, participants visited activity stations to contribute their ideas regarding community *vision and goals*, neighborhood *changes/trends*, and *desired activities*.

Major themes that were identified from this community feedback include:

- Social time with neighbors and *community involvement* is diminishing, reducing the sense of neighborhood.
- There is a high concern about *safety* in parks and community facilities, and about *traffic* and *transportation access*.
- Community members cited *inadequate space and recreational amenities* as well as *insufficient maintenance* as key issues that should be addressed.

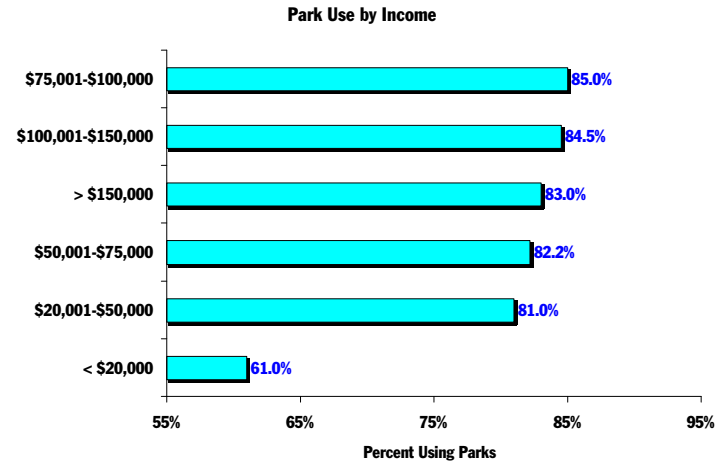


Figure A3: Park Use by Income

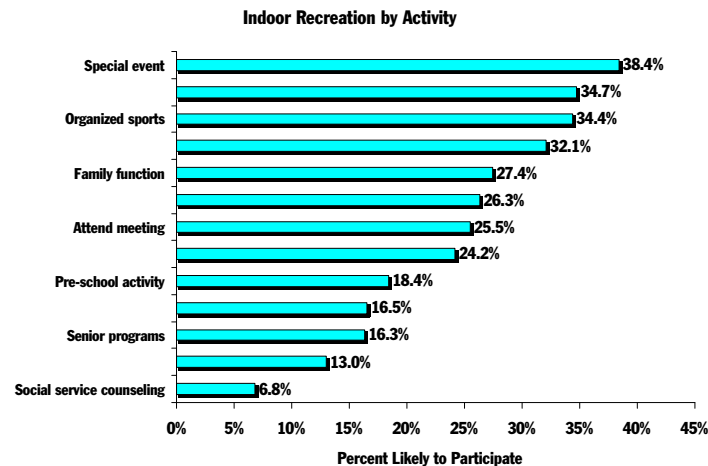


Figure A4: Indoor Recreation by Activity

# Community Needs Assessment

- The community wants more accessible, family-friendly *gathering places* to increase opportunities to socialize.
- San Jose's programs and recreational activities should be provided within *a neighborhood context*.
- Programs should be diverse, catering *to all cultures and age groups*.
- Programs and services for *youth and teens* should be a high priority.

## Focus Groups

Six affinity focus group meetings were held to solicit input from community members having a special interest in parks, community facilities and programs. The focus group topics included: seniors; regional parks and trails; community-based organizations; parents and child care; adult and youth sports; and major employers.

The group members were asked to comment on the following issues:

- *Primary needs* for parks, recreation and neighborhood services;
- *Facility, program and community service needs*;
- Desired *benefits* for their constituents; and
- Potential *partnerships* with the City and/or other agencies.

Major findings from the focus groups are as follows:

- There is a strong need for more *outreach and information*

to the public regarding the City's parks, services and programs.

- *Culturally-specific* advocacy and general services are needed.
- *Childcare subsidies* and *special needs care* are among the needs of parents.
- Participants supported *expanded and new facilities, programs, and services*, such as multi-use centers, sports complexes, parenting skills, and health screenings.
- Desired *benefits* to the community include: improved safety; better economic conditions; increased self-esteem; expanded educational opportunities; family, community, and intergenerational bonding; and healthier lifestyles.
- Participants favor *partnerships* between the City and other agencies to enhance programs and services.
- *Potential partners* include public and private sector organizations, educational institutions, youth programs, churches, the media, non-profits, social service organizations, neighborhood and park associations, and justice agencies.

## Youth/Teen Workshop

Twenty-seven teens, ages 13 to 18, met to contribute their ideas to the strategic plan. Participants identified core interests, including teamwork, youth clubs, sports, park/wilderness experiences, social events, unique work experiences, family experiences and social interaction. These interests can be incorporated into future programs and services.

Other findings from the Youth/Teen Workshop include:

- Teens favored traditional park activities, such as *sports, games and passive activities*.
- Teens also expressed an interest in *the arts*, including music, concerts, and youth drama productions.
- *Priority park elements* include traditional athletic facilities, playground elements, landscaping and shade, recreation centers, and water elements, such as a small lake, swimming pool, and water slide.
- *Innovative ideas* generated by teen participants included a tagger wall, electrical outlets for hooking up portable stereos, an outdoor cinema, a hip-hop dance club, and sports equipment checkout.
- In describing their *favorite recreational experiences*, participants' reflections included social experiences with family and friends, listening to music and relaxing, wilderness experiences, situations where teamwork was required, and introspective peaceful moments.
- These teens identified improving existing parks and expanding recreation programs as high *priorities for funding*.

## **Children's Fair Activity Booth**

To solicit ideas from youth about their favorite recreational activities, an activity booth was set up at the San Jose Children's Fair. Approximately 135 children participated in activities at the booth, providing valuable information for the strategic planning process.

Children selected their three favorite play activities from sketches provided and posted them on a board by their age group. This created a display of favorite activities by age group, and provided an opportunity for children to share their ideas with one another. Children also drew pictures about favorite park activities.

Information gathered from the children's activity cards and drawings include:

- The youth of San Jose have a wide range of interests, with emphasis on *water-related activities* (water play, swimming and fishing), and *sports*.
- Older children also are interested in *drama* and *reading*.
- In the youngest (ages 3 to 5) and oldest (ages 9 to 12) age groups, *water-related activities* were the most popular.
- *Basketball, swimming and sand play* were the top three favorite activities of children ages 6 to 8 years. Picnicking, baseball, and skating/skateboarding/rollerblading were also popular.
- Children's drawings consistently included many *natural elements*, such as trees, flowers, grass, animals, butterflies, birds, water and suns.
- *Swings and slides* were the most frequently drawn play ground equipment.

## **Staff Workshop**

The San Jose Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department held a staff workshop as part of its quarterly department meeting. The workshop was designed to solicit

# Community Needs Assessment

input from the staff regarding the current state of the Department as well as consider issues affecting the Department's future.

Working in small groups, staff focused on issues that may become important parts of the strategic plan. These issues included: trends, desired outcomes/benefits, priority populations, program improvements, facility improvements, and organizational improvements.

Highlights from the staff workshop are as follows:

- *Trends* include a greater diversity of cultures and languages, the aging population of baby boomers, a lack of facilities and open space combined with increasing community demand for services, and the effects of technology.
- Enhanced services and programs can lead to *benefits and outcomes* such as: improved staff training; greater involvement with the community; new partnerships with public and private organizations; better quality of life; stronger community involvement; improved safety, livability, and ownership of neighborhoods; increased property values; and more open space.
- The needs of *all age groups and populations* should be addressed to the best of the Department's ability.
- *Youth and children* were identified as very high priorities, followed by *teenagers, seniors and persons with disabilities*.
- The most frequent suggestion for program and service

improvements was to *improve cooperation, collaboration and communication* within the Department, with other departments and agencies, and with the community.

- Other suggestions for improvements included better training in areas of *cultural sensitivity, customer service, leadership, and technology*.

## Maintenance Management Workshop

A workshop was held to solicit input from the neighborhood and regional maintenance management staff. Participants included representatives from the Departments of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, Public Works, General Services, and Conventions, Arts and Entertainment.

Key comments included:

### *Facility Improvements*

- Increase *maintenance staff involvement* in planning and design of facilities as an investment in fewer future maintenance problems.
- Consider the implications of San Jose's *increasing population* and *changing demographics* during facility planning and design.
- Consider adding multi-use *sports complexes* and *special use facilities*.
- Select plant materials for *ease of maintenance*.
- Develop additional *joint use facilities*.
- Balance *renovation of existing facilities* and *development of new facilities* when planning future improvements.

## *Maintenance Improvements*

- Improve *event distribution* among facilities.
- Increase *user group involvement* in maintenance.
- Develop coordinated *volunteer programs*.
- Improve *emergency response* times.
- Perform *preventative equipment maintenance*.

## *Organizational Development*

- Increase *staff development*.
- Increase *partnerships*.
- Improve the use of *technology and communication tools*.
- Create more opportunities for *communication*.

## **Program and Service Assessment**

A program and service assessment was conducted to identify community needs, and to tie future service needs to facility improvements. The study included the programs and services currently offered by the Conventions, Arts and Entertainment Department's Visitor Services Division and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services. The study documented trends, opportunities for program and service improvements, and possible organizational improvements.

San Jose is one of the nation's fastest growing cities and has a remarkably diverse population. To address these challenges, the City of San José has adopted a neighborhood planning approach. Recreation, youth services, senior services, and neighborhood services are customized to meet the needs of over 400 San Jose neighborhoods. As a result of its neigh-

borhood planning initiatives, San Jose has become a national leader in reclaiming its neighborhoods from the adverse effects of drugs and gangs, and in restoring community pride and leadership.

To accomplish this task, City of San José Departments and Divisions work in collaboration with each other, and with community-based organizations. Staff are key facilitators of community involvement and empowerment.

Beginning with fiscal year 1999-2000, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services has transitioned to a results management budgeting process, referred to as "Investing In Results" in San Jose. Each division has developed program performance measures that are aligned with the Department's mission. The Visitor Services and Facilities Division of the Department of Conventions, Arts and Entertainment, which operates the City's regional park system and visitor destinations, will complete its transition to performance-based budgeting in fiscal year 2000-2001. "Investing in Results" will ensure that programs and services are continuously evaluated and opportunities for improvement are identified.

## **Methodology**

A variety of sources were used in the preparation of the program and service analysis:

- Interviews were conducted in person and by telephone with key staff in each program or service area.
- Community input received during the strategic plan's community needs assessment phase, including focus



# Community Needs Assessment

groups, workshops, meetings, and events, was reviewed and incorporated.

- Planning and budget documents prepared by the City, County, statewide organizations, and community-based organizations were reviewed and incorporated into the program and service assessment.

## Mission

The mission statements of the Departments of Conventions, Arts and Entertainment and Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services emphasize:

- Enhancing the *quality of life* for San Jose residents;
- Strengthening a *sense of community*;
- Improving *neighborhood livability*; and
- Contributing to a *vital economy*.

## Desired Benefits

The benefits residents desire from the City's parks, recreation programs and community services are summarized below. These benefits are reflected in the mission statements of both departments:

- Positive *alternatives for youth*.
- An enhanced *quality of life*.
- Safer and *cleaner* environments.
- Increased appreciation of the *natural environment*.
- Expanded opportunities for *family activities*.

- Increased opportunities for *social interaction*.
- Enhanced *community identity* and *civic pride*.
- A sense of *community involvement* and *ownership*.
- Enhanced *social, cognitive* and *emotional growth*.
- Enhanced *physical* and *mental health*.
- Improved *communication* and *interaction* among cultures and generations.
- Enhanced *property values*.
- A *healthy economy*.

## Opportunities For Improvement

During the program and service assessment, suggestions were made to increase the effectiveness of the Departments in the areas of internal organization, outreach and marketing, community involvement, collaboration and partnerships, and delivery of programs and services. These suggestions and opportunities are summarized in Appendix E. A description of current programs available to San Jose residents and examples of collaborations created to deliver services also are included.

## Facility Analysis

A facility analysis was conducted to assess San Jose's park and recreational facility needs both currently and twenty years into the future. This section describes the City's current parkland inventory, demand for facilities, and the goal update process for neighborhood/community parks and community centers. It also describes other facility needs identified during the community needs assessment.

To determine current level of service (LOS), an inventory of the City's existing parks and recreational facilities was completed. This inventory included neighborhood/community parks, citywide/regional parks, school district facilities, County parks, and other open space resources.

An update of neighborhood/community parkland goals provided a basis for evaluating current needs and for determining additional needs for the next twenty years. Based on the updated LOS standard, significant neighborhood/community park needs exist in most council districts. Projected neighborhood/community park needs for the year 2020 show even greater deficits in parkland with sufficient acreage currently acquired in only one council district.

Developing a program-driven goal for community centers for Council adoption was an additional focus of the study. In September 1998, the Department developed community center program, facility, and staffing goals that were referred to in this strategic plan process. The program goal identified recreation, social services, and community development services as the key program areas to be offered in each Council District. In October 1999, the Department reassessed its community, youth, and senior center staffing needs by conducting an analysis of center programming and staff resources, a survey of both user and non-users, and a comparative study of ten cities and four community agencies. The conclusions, which supported the Department's 1998 staffing goals, were referred to this strategic plan process. Along with these two memorandums, the Department has developed Aging and Youth Services Master Plans, which were adopted in February 1994 and March 1996, respectively. Both Master Plans identify program goals that have been incorporated into the strategic planning process.

Because of the great challenge and importance of meeting the goals for neighborhood/community parks and community centers, existing goals for other park types and recreation facilities developed during the City's previous plan, *Leisure and Life 2000*, were not carried forward in this strategic plan. This strategic plan only recommends quantitative goals for neighborhood/community parks and community centers. However, other facility needs were noted during the community needs assessment. A summary of these needs is provided at the end of this section.

## **Current Inventory**

The data source for this inventory is the City's current Park Maintenance Management System (PMMS) Inventory (January 1999) and the Park and Community Facilities Department (PCFD) Inventory (August 1999). In some cases, there were inconsistencies between these databases. Data for school outdoor recreation areas was gathered from site observations and through a survey of school districts.

Major categories of City parklands include:

- *Neighborhood Parks:* Neighborhood parks provide a range of active and passive recreational opportunities, including play areas, picnic facilities, open turf areas, and sports fields. These parks are often collocated with schools. They are located within easy walking distance of residences and generally do not exceed 10-12 acres.
- *Community Parks:* Community parks may include specialized facilities, such as community gardens, lighted sports fields and swimming pools. Community parks generally focus on active recreation uses. They are typically between 15-30 acres in size.

# Community Needs Assessment

- *Citywide/Regional Facilities:* Citywide/regional facilities have a unique nature that attracts visitors from throughout the region. Varying in size, these parks provide both passive and active recreation, and may include trails and park-chains, heritage gardens, zoos, museums and historic sites, amusement parks, golf courses, and hillside open space.
- *Open Space:* Open space is a land or water area that is accessible for public recreation use and is maintained in its natural state as essentially undeveloped. Open spaces serve the purpose of protecting scenic beauty, natural resources and wildlife, and preserving areas of historical significance. These areas are considered regional attractions.

Table A1 summarizes the City of San Jose's current inventory. Neighborhood/community parks total 1051.3 acres. Neighborhood serving portions of citywide/regional parks are included in the acreage totals for neighborhood/community parks. Citywide/regional parks total 2696.6 acres. City of San José parkland acreage totals 3,747.9 acres or 4.1 acres/1000 population.

Of interest is the parkland contribution of other agencies and San Jose's creek trail acreage. San Jose's creek trail acreage has not been completely inventoried to date, and accurate acreage data is not yet available. However, over 100 linear miles of developed trails are proposed as part of the strategic plan that will link a number of City and County Parks. School acreage (hard court and soft court) totals

Neighborhood/Community Parks		Acres
Sub Total		1,051.30
Citywide / Regional Parks		
Sub Total		2,696.60
Total City Acres		3,747.90
Other Facilities / Agencies		Acres
City of San Jose Trails		unknown
Schools		1,891.10
County		9,003.70
Other Open Space		3,660.60
Total		14,555.40

Table A1: San Jose's Current Park Inventory

1891.1 acres — more acres than provided by the City for neighborhood and community parks. The County also makes a significant contribution, especially in the area of regional parks, with 9003.7 acres. In addition, there is a number of other open space providers, including the Santa Clara Valley Water District, PG&E, and the National Wildlife Refuge. This contribution is over 14,555 acres.

In addition, the City of San José is served by many private recreation providers, such as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, community-based organizations, fitness clubs, martial arts organizations, swim clubs, and golf courses. Although these services are not totally comparable with City services, their availability should be considered when prioritizing needed improvements. In addition, cooperative agreements should continue to be developed and pursued to meet current and future needs.

## **Current and Future Demand**

Current park and community facility use and community priorities for future improvements were identified. These needs are described in the previous sections of the community needs assessment. Sources include community input received at workshops and a household telephone survey conducted as part of the strategic planning process. Telephone survey findings provide statistically valid data on community needs and priorities for the parks and community facilities. Major survey findings are located on page A2 of this appendix.

## **Neighborhood and Community Parks**

San Jose's neighborhood and community parks were a major focus of the facility analysis. There is a large deficit of neighborhood/community park acreage and these parklands are very important in meeting the day-to-day recreation needs of the community. In addition, the City will have difficulty achieving proposed neighborhood/community park goals due to the high cost of land, and limited amount of undeveloped land available.

## **Comparable Cities Survey**

Five West Coast cities were surveyed to gather comparative LOS standards and inventory data: Portland, San Diego, Sacramento, Phoenix, and Seattle. Seattle, San Diego and Phoenix are most similar in population size to San Jose. Seattle is most similar to San Jose in population density per square mile. National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA) standards were also noted for comparison purposes (NRPA, 1990).

Table A2 compares parkland facility goals and the existing level of service for neighborhood and community parks for each of the responding cities. San Jose's goals are from the City's last adopted master plan, *Leisure and Life 2000*. All goals and level of service data were converted to a common ratio for ease of comparison.

The existing level of service for neighborhood/community park acres per 1000 population ranged from 4.4 to 10.5 acres in the cities surveyed. The City of San José has the *lowest reported existing level of service*. Only City neighborhood/community-serving park acres were included in the calculation.

When existing standards for neighborhood/community park types were reviewed, standards ranged from 4.4 to 10.5 acres per 1000 population. Although the City of San Jose's existing goals include school district acreage, San Jose has the *lowest reported acreage of land per 1000 population*. The NRPA standard for neighborhood/community parks is 6.25 to 10.5 acres per 1000 population.

## **Recommended Service Level Goal**

Clearly, neighborhood/community parks are in high demand in San Jose. Park renovations and acquisition of additional open space are the community's highest spending priorities for park and recreation facility improvements, according to the strategic plan telephone survey. The City of San Jose's existing inventory of neighborhood/community parks and its adopted goals are the lowest of any comparable city.

# Community Needs Assessment

## APPENDIX A

Parkland Type										
	Phoenix	Portland		Sacramento	San Diego		Seattle	San Jose		NRPA 1990 #acres /1000
	Level of Service #acres/1000	Level of Service #acres/1000	Existing Standards #acres/1000	Level of Service #acres/1000	Level of Service #acres/1000	Existing Standards #acres/1000	Level of Service #acres/1000	Level of Service #acres/1000	Existing Standards #acres/1000	
Neighborhood / Community Parks										
Mini-Park	na	na	ns	na	na	1.6 ac	na	na	ns	.25-.5 ac
Neighborhood Park	na	0.91 ac	5 ac	1.55 ac	na	1.43-2 ac	na	1.4	3.5 ac *	1-2 ac
Community Park	na	1.08 ac	<i>combined with neighborhood space</i>	2.01 ac	na	.72-8 ac	1.62 ac	<i>combined with neighborhood space</i>	<i>combined with neighborhood space</i>	5-8 ac
Citywide / Regional Parks										
Regional Park	na	3.36 ac	ns	2.24 ac	na	ns	4.95 ac	3	7.5 ac	5-10 ac
Open Space/ Greenways	na	11.60 ac	ns	1.79 ac	27.67 ac	ns	.82 ac	na	20 ac	variable
TOTALS										
Total of All Parkland Acreage per 1000	26.13 ac	18.24 ac	13 ac	7.59 ac	28.33 ac	20 ac	11.99 ac	4.1 ac	31 ac	15-20 ac

ns = no standard; na = not available

\* includes outdoor school acres not to exceed 2 acres per site

Table A2: Survey of Comparable Cities

The City's existing neighborhood/community park level of service from *Leisure and Life 2000* included school district acres, limited to 2 acres per site and multiplied by 60% to account for limited hours of access. An accurate inventory of school district recreation space was not available. The calculation of included school district acres sometimes proved confusing and difficult to explain to developers and the community. This goal included a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile service radius for neighborhood/community serving parkland. Given the high cost of property acquisition and limited amount of undeveloped land within the City, the City of San José will be unable to acquire the total additional acreage needed to achieve a neighborhood/community park goal of 3.5 acres per 1000 population by 2020. Therefore, adopting a higher one could not be considered. Instead, an accurate inventory of school district recreation space was compiled and the method of calculating included school acreage was simplified.

According to the telephone survey, about 56% of residents use school recreation facilities, indicating the importance of schools as a community recreation resource. Because of the difficulty of acquiring additional neighborhood/community parkland, the importance of school recreation space will continue to grow. Therefore, it was recommended that school district recreation acreage be included at 100% with no limitation in acreage in the calculation of neighborhood/community park level of service.

The recommended City of San José level of service goal for neighborhood/community parkland addresses both quantity and distribution of parks. The goal is to provide 3.5 acres per

1000 population of neighborhood/community serving parkland. To provide equal access, the parkland should lie within a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile reasonable walking distance of residences. Barriers, such as major arterials, creeks, rivers, and architectural barriers, are seen as impediments to this walking distance. The strategic plan will attempt to mitigate such conditions.

## Future Need

Currently, there are discrepancies in existing level of service for neighborhood/community parkland provided in each council district. Three districts (Districts 2, 5, and 8) are not currently underserved by neighborhood/community parks. All other districts are currently underserved. When parkland needs are projected to the year 2020, all districts are deficient in neighborhood/community parkland with the exception of Council District 8.

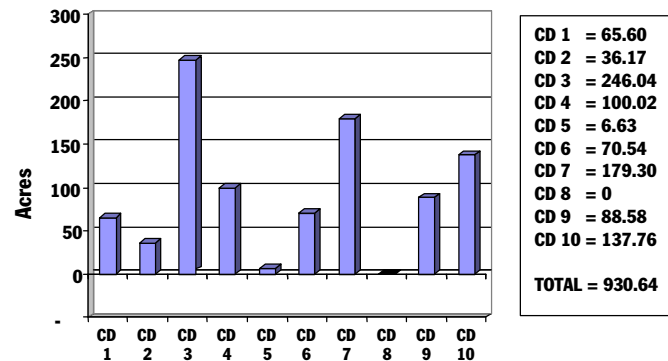


Figure A5: Anticipated Neighborhood/Community Serving Parkland Needs 2020

Figure A5 displays projected neighborhood/community park acreage needs by council district for the year 2020 based on the recommended goal. In 2020, the total acreage needed to meet level of service goals for neighborhood/community parks in all council districts is 930.6 acres.

### Underserved Areas

Areas of the City that do not have a neighborhood/community park facilities within a ¼-mile radius of residences or those areas where access was impeded by a barrier were identified as underserved. For underserved areas that have access to school recreation space, improvements to school recreation space was identified as a high priority capital improvement in the strategic plan. For those underserved areas with no access to schools, other opportunities for improving access to neighborhood/community parks were identified.

Chapter 6 provides a detailed description of underserved areas within each council district and recommended facility improvements to address these areas.

### Community Centers

The future need for community centers was also a focus of this study. To determine the need for community centers, tasks included:

- A comparable cities survey;
- Review and refinement of core services that should be available in all council districts;
- Review and refinement of community center types;
- Recalculation of the space requirements for each type of

community center;

- Review of the existing community center standards report and Aging and Youth Services Master Plans; and
- Identification of underserved areas.

### Comparable Cities Survey

Three of the five cities surveyed had information available regarding the square footage of community facilities provided:

- Portland reported that they provide 268,972 square feet or *534 square feet/1000 population*.
- San Diego provides approximately 751,538 square feet or *626 square feet/1000 population*.
- Seattle provides approximately 360,000 square feet or *698 square feet/1000 population*.
- Phoenix and Sacramento *did not have data* on their community facilities.

San Jose currently provides 300,265 square feet or 330 square feet/1000 population. The City of San José operates 26 community centers. Twenty of these are over 20 years old. Four community centers are in good condition, and 22 require modernization, renovation or replacement. Most existing recreation buildings are approximately 25 years old and in need of renovation. The comparable cities surveyed provided 500-600 square feet/1000 population. San Jose currently provides the lowest level of service for community centers of any city surveyed.

## **Core Services**

Based on input received during the community needs assessment and from prior Recreation and Community Division Services staff input, a staff workshop was held to identify core recreation services that should be available to all San Jose residents. These services include:

- Preschool, elementary and middle school programs;
- Youth programs;
- Senior programs;
- Sports leagues and indoor fitness;
- Community education and recreation;
- Arts and cultural activities;
- Drop-in activities, such as:
  - Computer lab
  - Social lounge
  - Game room
- Community rentals;
- Information and referral;
- Access to City departments; and
- Volunteer programs.

## **Community Center Types and Space Requirements**

Based on an analysis of existing facilities and space requirements for core services, a three-tiered approach to community facilities was identified, including:

- Multi-service community centers;

- Satellite community centers; and
- Recreation buildings.

*Multi-service community centers:* These larger community centers (20,000-40,000 square feet) will serve as a focal point for program delivery in each council district. When possible, multi-service community centers will be collocated with other community facilities, such as libraries. Amenities may include: a preschool room, gymnasium, computer room, game room, homework center, weight room, kitchen, and classrooms and multi-purpose rooms for a variety of group sizes and activities. Neighborhood Services will be included to promote neighborhood revitalization, build capacity of neighborhood organizations and provide community members with access to City Departments and services. Outdoor features will include: parking, sports fields, children's play areas, and hard courts for sports. A therapeutic recreation specialist will be provided at each multi-service center to assist staff and provide inclusive programs for persons with disabilities.

*Satellite community centers:* Satellite community centers (10,000 to 20,000 square feet) will be provided to augment recreation programs and community services when needed to achieve the recommended service radius or meet specialized needs. Based on customer needs and interests, these centers may serve seniors, youth, persons with disabilities, and/or the general population. Use of satellite community centers may change over time along with neighborhood demographics.

*Recreation buildings:* In cases of high neighborhood need, smaller recreation buildings (1,000 to 10,000 square feet) may



be used to provide specific recreation and neighborhood services. Because of higher operations and maintenance costs, and limited capacity and future flexibility, new construction of recreation buildings will be limited.

Detailed space requirements for these community center types are provided in the *Strategy Options Report* (MIG, Inc., April 2000). This document is available from the City of San José Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services.

#### Recommended Community Center Goal

The City of San José will continue to emphasize cooperative partnerships in facility development, programming, and operations. These services will be provided through a network of community facilities, at schools, and at facilities operated by community-based organizations. A minimum of one multi-service community center will be provided per council district with the goal of providing access to recreation programs and community services within a two-mile radius of residences. In underserved areas, satellite centers may be developed to meet community needs.

Figures A6 and A7 illustrates existing and projected community center square footage needed to achieve adequate program delivery by council district.

#### Underserved Areas

The distribution of multi-service community centers and satellite community centers was evaluated based on the criterion of a two-mile service radius for all residents. Most areas of the city are well served by community centers. Several areas of the City are outside the 2-mile service radius, and are underserved. These areas are identified in Chapter 6,

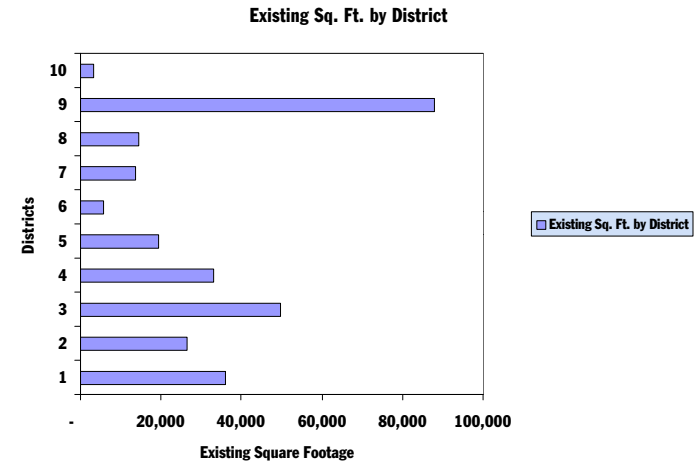


Figure A6: Existing Community Center Square Footage by Council District

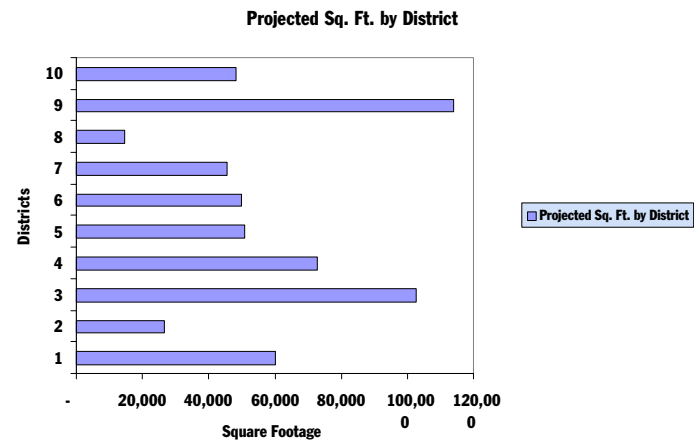


Figure A7: Projected Community Center Square Footage by Council District

along with recommendations to meet needs in underserved areas. Most areas are addressed in the strategic plan's capital action plan.

## Other Facility Needs

Although not quantifiable through an adopted recreation standard, the following recreation needs were identified during the community needs assessment:

- **Citywide/Regional Parks:** San Jose's citywide and regional parks are significant recreation resources. Although few undeveloped parcels exist in the City that have potential as new citywide/regional parks, many existing portions of citywide/regional parks could accommodate additional development. These areas represent an opportunity for expanded recreation facilities.
- **Passive Turf Areas:** According to the telephone survey, hanging out is the most popular recreation activity in San Jose. To meet current and future recreation needs, the design of neighborhood and community parks should continue to include passive turf areas that support hanging out and relaxing as well as active recreation facilities. Development of mini parks is another crucial strategy for meeting these needs.
- **Trails:** Trail-related recreation, such as hiking, biking, and running, are among the most popular recreation activities in San Jose and statewide. San Jose's future trail system will be a tremendous asset to both recreation and

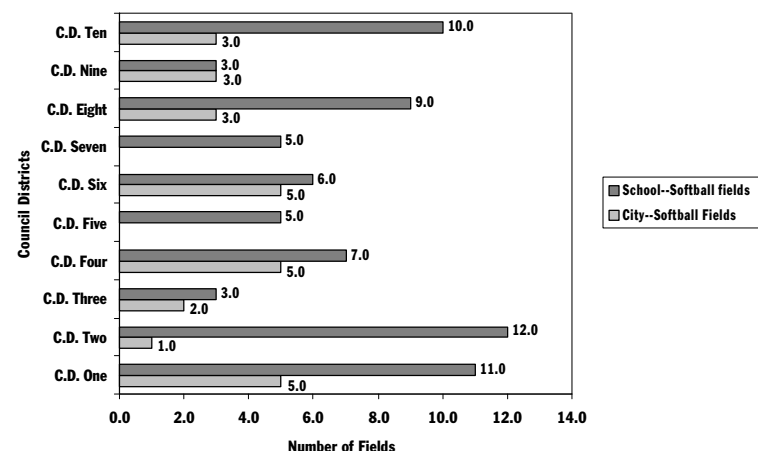


Figure A7: Soccer Fields by Council District

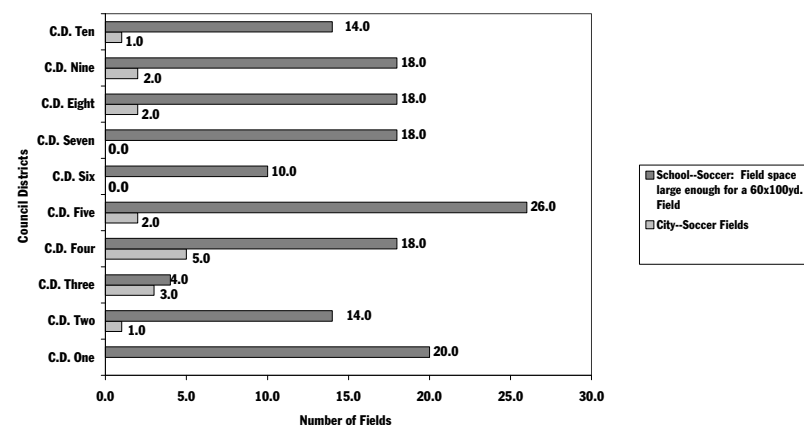


Figure A8: Softball Fields by Council District

- *District Sports:* According to the strategic plan survey, sports participation is the second most popular activity at both parks and schools in San Jose. Additional opportunities should be provided for youth sports, especially soccer and softball. Currently, some council districts have greater access to sports fields than others (figures A7 and A8). Additional fields should be added at existing neighborhood and community parks, and school fields should be renovated to meet current and future needs. Equitable access should be provided in all council districts.
- *Sports Complexes:* During the community needs assessment process, demand was noted for larger scale, citywide sports complexes, such as softball, tennis, soccer, and aquatics. These high quality facilities would primarily serve adult sports leagues.
- *Gymnasiums:* The demand for gymnasium reservations is evidence of the need for more gymnasiums in San Jose. Currently, the City of San José has three gymnasiums. Other needs are met through city/school partnerships. To meet future needs, cooperative agreements with schools and other community organizations should be continued. In addition, the City should expand its inventory of gymnasiums by developing these facilities as part of future community centers and youth centers.
- *Swimming Pools:* Because of the cost of development and the many existing pools within San Jose's 19 school

districts, enhanced collaboration with schools to increase swimming opportunities is recommended.

- *Restrooms:* A demand for restroom renovations and additional restroom facilities was noted during the community needs assessment.
- *Children's Play Areas:* Renovations to play areas should be a high priority for the strategic plan's capital action plan.
- *New Facility Types:* The demand for other facilities, such as skate parks for youth, community gardens, and dog parks, was noted during the community needs assessment. These should be provided according to needs in each council district.

### Environmental Scan

An environmental scan was compiled to summarize major themes identified during the community needs assessment.

These themes included:

- *Focusing on community image and livability*  
San Jose residents recognize the role of parks, community facilities, recreation programs and neighborhood services in creating a livable community. The facilities and services provided by the City of San José and partner agencies will attract businesses and residents, and help revitalize neighborhoods.

- *Promoting stewardship and volunteerism*

The City of San José will continue to promote stewardship of the City's natural resources among residents of all ages. Volunteerism will be expanded to enhance a sense of community among residents, improve facilities and services, and provide cost savings.

- *Incorporating leisure with today's lifestyles*

Recreation and community services will be offered in accessible locations, and must be responsive to the challenges of community members, such as stress, youth development, aging and disability, and ethnic diversity.

- *Developing public gathering places*

It is essential that community members have access to public gathering places, such as neighborhood serving parks and plazas, that are accessible and close to home.

- *Expanding trails and improving accessibility*

San Jose's trails are the backbone of the City's park and recreation system, providing access to recreation and natural resources. The trail system will be expanded to accommodate the growth in trail-related recreation, such as biking, jogging, and walking. Trails also will provide alternatives to automobile transportation for some residents.

- *Acquiring and preserving open space*

As San Jose continues to grow, a critical priority will be to balance development with adequate open space.

The General Plan's greenline strategy describes the City's natural development limits.

- *Enhancing facilities and programs for all*

Programs and facilities will be provided by the City and its partner agencies to meet the needs of residents of all ages and abilities. Youth, seniors, and persons with disabilities are high priority for these services.

- *Improving health and wellness*

Recreation and community services are essential to the mental and physical health of residents. The City of San José and its partner agencies will promote the health and well-being of residents by providing recreation opportunities, programs and services that encourage residents to lead active, healthy lives.

- *Supporting athletic/sports facilities and programs*

Casual and organized sports are among the most popular recreation activities in San Jose. These activities are valued as an important component of active, healthy lifestyles. The City of San José and its partner agencies will provide facilities and programs that support casual and organized sports activity for adults and youth.

- *Prioritizing resources and partnerships*

Resources will not be available to meet all of the needs documented through the strategic plan's community needs assessment. The City of San José has involved the community in prioritizing needs. Partnerships will

continue to be enhanced to expand services and improve facilities.

These themes became the foundation for the development of strategies presented in the *City of San José Greenprint: A Twenty-Year Strategic Plan for Parks and Community Facilities and Programs*.